

WJEC GCSE History

Sample responses

UNIT 3 THEMATIC STUDY FROM A BROAD HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3A. CHANGES IN CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, c. 1500 to the present day

QUESTION 5

This question is about the causes of crime.

Explain why opportunities for crime increased during the eighteenth century. [12]

Candidate A

Crime increased during the 18th century for many reasons. There were many highwaymen who robbed rich people travelling along the roads, because rich people often carried money with them when they travelled around. The highwaymen would wait in lonely areas and stop a stage coach and rob the people inside. There was also a lot of smuggling going on in the 18th century. This is because the government put high taxes on goods like tea and brandy. Lots of people who lived in places like Cornwall were very poor and got involved in smuggling to earn a bit of extra money. All sorts of people got involved, even the local gentry. People liked cheap goods so the chances of smugglers getting caught were very slim.

Analysis

- The candidate has some knowledge of the question. However, it lacks detail in the first part of the answer, on highway robbery. This puts it into AO1 Band 1.
- There is a partial attempt to explain why opportunities for crime increased. There is some reference to the historical context, but it is not developed enough to take the answer into a Band 3. Therefore this response is in AO2 Band 2.

AO1: Band 1 - Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the key features of the question.

AO2: Band 2 - Partially explains the issue with some reference to the appropriate historical context.

AO1– 1/2

AO2 – 4/10

Total - 5/12

Candidate B

During the 18th century economic changes resulted in Britain becoming much wealthier and this meant that opportunities for crime increased. New faster roads were being built and the rich began to travel more. They often carried their wealth with them and this created an opportunity for highwaymen to stop coaches and rob wealthy travellers on isolated stretches of road. Highwaymen were hard to catch and often used local inns as their base.

Smuggling was another crime of opportunity. In the 18th century governments put high taxes on many imported goods e.g. tea, brandy and tobacco, which meant that the prices of these goods increased considerably. The tax on tea was 119% so anyone who could smuggle these products into the country had an opportunity to make huge amounts of money. Along the coast smuggling was common with highly organized gangs involved. A farm labourer could earn 6 or 7 times more money in one night's smuggling than he could in a day's work in the fields. People from all levels of society liked the cheap "black market" goods from smugglers so it was difficult to catch smugglers. Even when smugglers were put on trial juries often acquitted them because they thought smuggling was not really an offence.

Analysis

- The candidate has a detailed knowledge of the question with clear and accurate references to the two crimes particularly associated with the 18th century. This puts the response into AO1 Band 2.
- There is an explanation of the issue within the historical context, with some valid observations about why opportunities for both highway robbery and, more so, smuggling increased. However, this response is not fully developed (particularly in the first paragraph). Therefore this response is in AO2 Band 3.

AO1: Band 2 - Demonstrates detailed knowledge and understanding of the key features in the question.

AO2: Band 3 - Explains the issue set within the appropriate historical context.

AO1 – 2/2

AO2 – 7/10

Total – 9/12

QUESTION 7

To what extent has poverty been the main cause of crime over time?

[16+4]

Candidate A

Poverty has always been one of the main causes of crime over time.

In Tudor times there were many poor people called vagrants. They were a problem because they would commit crimes to survive. Many people lost their jobs when the monistries closed down or when kings got rid of soldiers from their armies, so poverty was a major problem. Religion was also a problem for the Tudors. There were changes in religion from catholic to protestant and back again and you could get in serious trouble if you did not follow the same religion as the king or queen. When Mary was queen she burned a lot of protestants because they would not become catholic like she wanted e.g. Rawlins White in Cardiff. Later Guy Fawkes was executed because he was a catholic who tried to blow up parliament which was protestant.

In the industrial period poverty was still a major cause of crime. Many people in the new industrial towns were poor because there weren't enough jobs to go around. They also lived in very bad slum houses and even had to pay for things like water. Sometimes they lost their jobs because machines took over. Luddites smashed machines because they wanted their jobs back. Some people became highway robbers or smugglers to make money. There were also riots at this time eg the Merthyr Riots and the Chartist attack on Newport, which was about working men wanting the same vote as the upper classes.

In modern times we still have poor people but poverty is not a major cause of crime like it used to be because people now have benefits if they are unemployed or ill. Some poor people still commit crimes because they want to have expensive goods like other people. Sometimes people steal to be able to buy drugs. Another cause of crime in modern times is car crime and there are lots of crimes involving cars eg speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs or stealing cars. There are also crimes caused by the internet like pedophiles grooming young children or people selling fake goods in sites like Amazon. Religious crimes have also come back because now we have terrorists planting bombs or attacking people with knives in London and other places. This may be different from tudor times but just like Guy Fawkes they are willing to use violence and kill people for their religion.

Today poverty is not the main cause of crime but over time it probably has been the main cause.

Analysis

- This candidate demonstrates a quite detailed knowledge. There are references to a reasonable range of causes over three historical eras. There are also clear, if brief, references to the Welsh context (Rawlins White and 19th century riots). This puts the response into AO1 Band 3.
- The response partially analyses the issue of poverty along with some other factors. However, the answer is rather mechanical. Analysis of the different causes lacks some

detail/development and does not consider the relative impact of the different factors.
There is an attempt at judgement, but it is brief. This puts the response into AO2 Band 3.

AO1: Band 3 – Demonstrates detailed knowledge and understanding of the key issue in the question.

AO2: Band 3 - Partially analyses the key issue along with a consideration of the impact of other factors in the historical context.

AO1: - 4/6

AO2: - 5/10

Total - 9/16 (plus SPaG – 3/4)

Candidate B

Poverty has always been a major cause of crime and at some periods of history it has been the main cause of crime. However, there have also been other factors which have also led to crime.

In the 16th and 17th centuries poverty was without doubt the cause of most crimes. Poverty increased at this time as many people found themselves out of work for various reasons. The ban on private armies, the dissolution of the monasteries and enclosure all led to unemployment and poverty. Many poor people became vagrants and this was seen as a serious threat by the ruling class. Laws were passed which made vagrancy an offence with harsh punishments for offenders.

Religion and religious belief was also a cause of crime during the Tudor and Stuart periods. Different monarchs had different ideas about religion and people who did not accept the religion of the ruler were guilty of heresy. Mary Tudor was a catholic and she burned 250 protestants. A Cardiff fisherman, Rawlins White, was one of those who was burned publicly for refusing to become a catholic. Religious differences also caused plots and rebellions. Henry VIII had to deal with the Pilgrimage of Grace, a rebellion against the dissolution of the monasteries. Elizabeth I faced many plots on her life and had to crush the northern earls when they tried to replace her with Mary queen of Scots.

Poverty remained the main cause of crime into the industrial revolution. However, economic change and new technology also created new types of crime. There was also political causes as working people demanded the right to vote. Working and living conditions were hard in both towns and countryside. Towns such as Merthyr experienced crimes such as theft and violence as people struggled to survive. The large numbers of people living in towns meant that large scale disturbances were not uncommon. The Merthyr riots of 1831 and the Chartist attack on Newport in the 1830s were caused by a combination of poor working and living conditions and political unrest. There was also rural unrest. The Swing Riots were caused by the introduction of new machines which took away the jobs of farm

labourers, while the Rebecca Riots were the result of high tolls. There was also a lot of long term poverty in rural areas.

During the modern period poverty has remained a cause of crime, but probably not the main one. As the country has become wealthier and the welfare state has been created so people do not have to turn to crime to survive. The introduction of new technology has been a major cause of crime in the 20th and 21st centuries. The most common type of crime now is car crime, with about a quarter of all drivers having a motoring conviction of some sort e.g. speeding.

The other form of technology which has contributed to huge increase in crime has been the computer. Computer related crime is the fastest growing offence in the UK. Most of the 5 million cases per year are related to fraud but there is also cyber-bullying and grooming of young children as well as hacks by international crime rings. Religion has also returned as a cause of crime. However, now it is far more likely to be Islamic terrorism, rather than an act of Christian heresy.

Overall poverty has probably been the main cause of crime over time, though its impact has lessened since the creation of the welfare state. Today technology, or rather the misuse of it, is the major contributor to crime and is likely to remain so into the future.

Analysis

- This candidate demonstrates a very detailed knowledge. There are references to a wide range of factors across the three historical eras. There are also clear and quite detailed references to the Welsh context, particularly for the 19th century. This puts this response into AO1 Band 4
- There is a full analysis of the issue of poverty as a major cause of crime, together with clear analysis of a range of other factors such as religion, politics and technological change. There has been an attempt to consider the relative impact of these various causes during the different historical eras. The candidate has also produced a clear judgement about the key issue. This puts this response into AO2 Band 4.

AO1: Band 4 - Demonstrates very detailed knowledge and understanding of the key issue in the question including clear and detailed references to the Welsh context.

AO2: Band 4 - Fully analyses the importance of the key issue. There will be a clear analysis of other factors and their relative impact set within the appropriate historical context.

AO1 – 5/6

AO2 – 8/10

Total – 13/16 (plus SPaG – 4/4)